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“ABLATIVE ABSOLUTES”?

Noting this plural on p. 161 of the February number of the *Journal*, may I ask if it would not be better for our pupils if we teachers spoke of “ablatives absolute,” just as we say “courts martial,” “lords temporal,” and the like? We should thereby at least not obscure for them what the thing is. I myself prefer to teach it as the “absolute ablative,” or the “absolved ablative” (i. e., absolved from construction), or the “scot-free” ablative, the “run-away” ablative—anything to make the phrase carry some sense to the learner and save him from parrot-repetition of unexplained conglomerates. Conglomerate-teaching leads to results such as the following: I recently had a class of a dozen beginners in Greek, all having previously studied Latin. On being asked which was the substantive in the phrase “ablative absolute,” all but one answered “absolute”!

In passing, may I ask if the very useful word “substantive” has quite disappeared from grammatical terminology? The word “noun” seems to have taken its place; but then what is to take the place of “noun,” which properly includes both adjective and substantive.

L. L. FORMAN

CORNELL UNIVERSITY